

# ABOLISHmke

actions and analysis from a bad place.

Milwaukee, WI has some of the highest incarceration rates and worst segregation in the world. Police and prison agents trap Black, Brown, Indigenous, and poor white people and take them to prisons up north where they are tortured and abused to death.

This city has been marked the worst place for Black children to grow up. The same white man has been mayor for sixteen years just 'cuz he once got hit with a pipe.

Regardless of what the t-shirts at the airport say, Milwaukee has not been “the good land” since white people came and took it from Algonquian people who named it such.

ABOLISHmke is for readers and writers committed to grappling with this city's darkness and kicking it until it bleeds light.



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## A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Fighting Snitch Houses



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[abolishmke.com](http://abolishmke.com)

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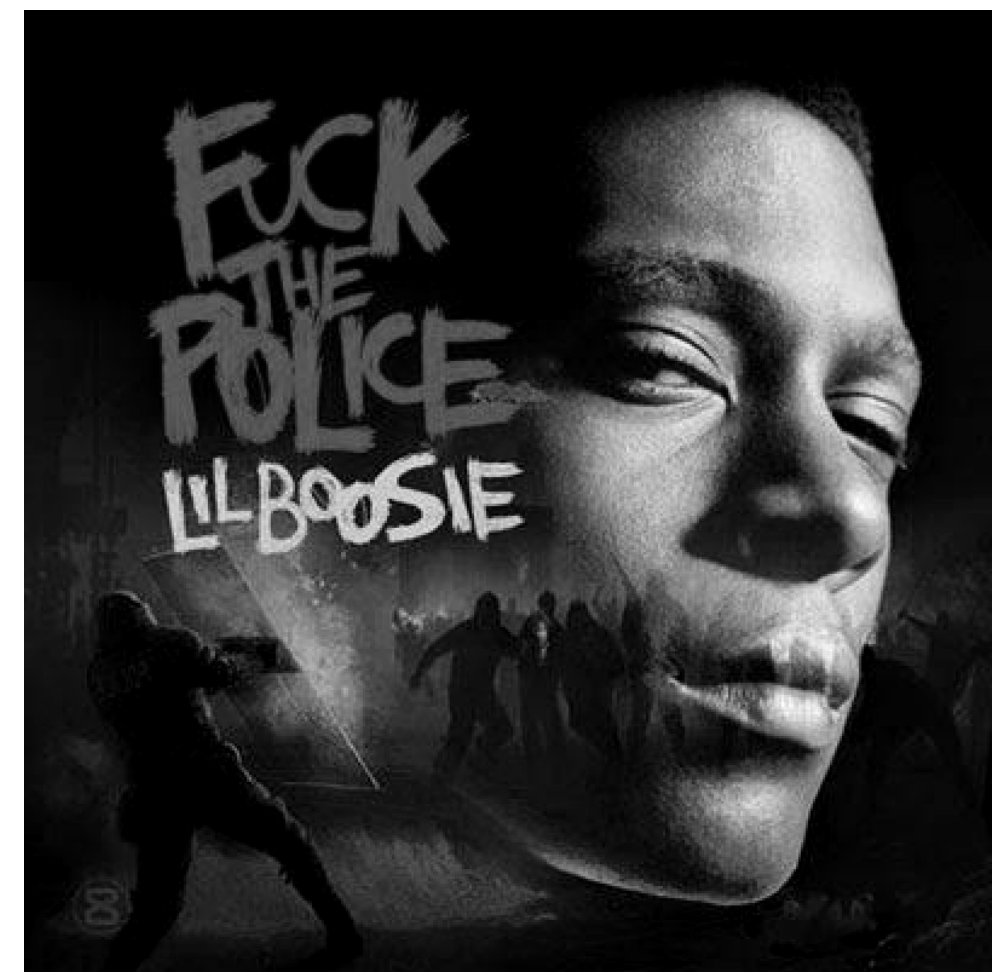
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Billy, and this is his issue' and they are talking to the person at DOT that can say, 'okay this is what you need to do' and they get a game plan on how to get their license straightened away. We help them gap that bridge [sic], so it becomes a centerpoint for law enforcement trust and confidence."

Sounds like, if you share information with the police, they'll help you access resources or straighten out your driver's license. If you don't, they'll pull you over, harass and arrest you, continuously. That's not building trust, it's widespread coercion, but a cop like Van Wanggaard, who has spent his whole life being deferred to and respected by people who fear his badge and his gun cannot even tell the difference.

Wanggaard and Taylor repeatedly spoke about how those of us who want to defund the police live in a fantasy world. Between Taylor's goofy stats and Wanggaards stories where he fails to recognize the fear and distrust behind those who treat him with kindness and respect, it's clear they are the ones living a fantasy. The terrible thing is, they're trying to impose this fantasy unto us all.





only have a negative experience, that’s all they have. If they have an opportunity to plant a garden, solve a problem with a house [...] attend a community meeting, it creates another experience.”

Is there anything senator Taylor doesn’t want the police taking on? Gardening, home repair, later she added: “you’ll have resource officers, I’d love to see counselors, AODA (alcohol and drug abuse) classes, it’s as robust as a community’s vision is.”

Senator Taylor seems to know she’s betraying the people. She said, “I am aware that opposition has been raised by the ‘don’t fund the police anymore’ movement. I get it. [...] I adamantly disagree with them.” Later she said “part of the problem is we’re having the ‘no police’ conversation in the COP house conversation.” Yes. We are talking about defunding the police. Liberals would prefer that we talk about unburdening the police of unnecessary roles. Meanwhile, snitch houses actively work to shovel more resources into police hands and more roles into their mandate. There is nothing wrong with having those conversations together, because it is absolutely the same conversation.

Organizers are starting to move against the insulting imitation of police reform coming through the Wisconsin legislature. Black Leaders Organizing for Communities (BLOC) held a day of action on Thursday May 27. One of these slap-in-the-face bills increases reporting on no-knock warrants, which will bring us back to the core problem with snitch houses. Rather than banning no knock warrants, as rep LaKeisha Meyers (d-Milwaukee) already proposed, this bill merely increases the study of their use. At the press conference, ACLU organizer Tomas Clauson responded, “the data is in, Breonna Taylor is not alive today, the data is in.” Local data is also already available. In 2019, police served a no-knock warrant based on a snitch’s claim that Jordan Paul Fricke was selling marijuana; Fricke defended himself against what he perceived to be a home invasion. One of the attacking cops died, and Fricke was railroaded by DA John Chisholm’s office and sentenced to death by incarceration. In truth, even a ban on no knock warrants is inadequate. There isn’t a real difference between no-knocks and their alternative. We will not be safe in our homes until police have no ability to enter without permission under any circumstance.

In addition to the tragic stories of Breonna Taylor and Jordan Fricke, more routine data is also available, it is also condemns the practice. Milwaukee activist Paul Mozina files record requests and testifies at almost every Fire and Police Commission hearing. On May 8, he posted some of his findings about warrants on the ACLU facebook page. In the last six months of 2020, Milwaukee police conducted 70 no-knock warrants, which targeted: “67 Black men, 4 hispanic men, 3 Black women, 2 white men, 2 white women, and 1 Native American man.” Almost every no-knock warrant was based on “confidential informant” testimony—snitching. We return to our first, most pressing concern with this legislation. Police gaining community trust and controlling resources means police recruiting confidential informants. That’s why we call them snitch houses. Any resources given to police will be used to turn neighbors against each other, target Black people, and do violence.

Wanggaard very nearly spelled this out explicitly during his testimony: “the focus is developing that strategy of people sharing information [...] and now you start bringing in resources [...] Most people get in trouble with the police driving without a license or driving revoked, and once you get a whole list of things on your driving record [...] to negotiate something where you’ve got a lengthy record so you’re not continuously getting arrested, that was the focus of our traffic guys. We worked out of each of these houses helping people resolve those issues. It made it a lot easier when you could walk in the door, and say ‘lookit, this is

# BLOCK SNITCH HOUSE LEGISLATION

Here at ABOLISHmke, we’ve put a lot of attention on the snitch house (AB258) bill (also known as COP house<sup>1</sup>) ever since it passed the senate with unanimous support. Well, that attention is starting to register victories. On June 2nd the Committee on Local Government held an executive session on it, and every democratic representative voted against it. Despite this, it still passed the committee — republicans dominate the legislature in Wisconsin<sup>2</sup>.

The next hurdle for this bill is a general vote in the assembly. After the senate passed the bill unanimously, we need to work to make sure that many, if not all, assembly democrats vote against this bill. Unfortunately, we can assume that rep. Sylvia Ortiz-Velez won’t vote with us, because she is the only democrat credited with introducing the bill. In doing so, she’s collaborating with republican representatives Janel Brandtjen and John Spiros (who both represent districts gerrymandered to crack Sussex and Wassau, respectively) and David Armstrong (who’s district doesn’t even include a city large enough to qualify for this grant).

Most of the people who are going to vote in favor of this bill don’t even represent districts with cities of over 30,000 people, which is the grant threshold. In fact, only half of the republicans who were allowed to vote on this committee represent districts with cities that would qualify— Rick Gundrum (parts of West Bend), Ken Skowronski (Franklin), John Macco (parts of Green Bay). There is something inherently wrong with a system that would allow for everyone representing Milwaukee to vote against a bill that would then pass and be forced onto the city of Milwaukee.

Below is a list of every democratic representative in the state assembly<sup>3</sup>. Baldeh, Conley & Spreitzer already voted against this bill in committee, I strongly encourage you to email them and thank them for voting against it. Then call on them to talk with their democratic counterparts in the assembly about why voting no is the right choice. Oftentimes people only email their direct representative, however we are recommending a more full-scale approach on this issue. Email everyone who represents any part of your city; anyone whose name you recognize; anyone who represents a city you like to visit; anyone who represents the city you grew up in or near. Or just pick someone with a funny name (looking at you, Snodgrass...)

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on these will be in this zine, in the articles that follow. We have also written about them extensively on our website: abolishmke.com

<sup>2</sup> [https://madison.com/ct/opinion/mailbag/larry-eriksson-gerrymandering-gives-us-more-conservative-republicans/article\\_f7c78b52-ce61-50c4-9219-d25d3b3c1db5.html](https://madison.com/ct/opinion/mailbag/larry-eriksson-gerrymandering-gives-us-more-conservative-republicans/article_f7c78b52-ce61-50c4-9219-d25d3b3c1db5.html) — Larry Eriksson discusses america’s gerrymandering problem, using Wisconsin as his example state, because it is infamously one of the most gerrymandered. All links are easily accessible in the articles on our website.

<sup>3</sup> List not included in this zine, as a result of complicated formatting issues and the reason for the list is that it makes reading this digitally and then responding easier, but that ease is removed when reading this in paper form — it is available on the website.

Some of these representatives likely won't have heard the public opposition to this trash bill, so please share our articles, as well as your personal thoughts and concerns. Rep Mark Spreitzer specifically cited public opposition to this bill being the reason he voted against it.

You can also reach out to your senator and demand that they release a statement expressing regret for their vote in favor and make sure it is sent to the governor's office, noting that he should veto the bill when it gets to his desk.

Working together, we took a bill that had unanimous support in the senate and turned all the democrats on the committee on local government against it. We can do it again. If we sow dissent in the assembly, and convince senators to recant their votes, we will see this harmful, police-expansionist bill vetoed!

Feel free to use this template<sup>4</sup> — it is versatile so you can send it to your representative or to an assembly member who doesn't represent you. Alternatively: pick a name at random and write your own! Have fun with it — be heard, let them know you say no!

*Rep. [name],  
I am writing to ask that you vote against Assembly Bill 258 (5).*

*Giving the police more space in our communities and more resources is not what the people of Wisconsin's cities want. Police hurt people; they break up communities and families; they put people in prisons. We need less of this.*

*It is shocking that this bill passed unanimously in the senate. However, after hearing public testimony, all Democratic members of the committee on local government voted against it.*

*Because of the outrageous gerrymandering in Wisconsin, the bill will pass based on republican support alone - many of whom don't even represent cities that would be affected by this bill. The Democrats need to make a stand and assert the needs of the people in Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Madison and elsewhere when we say: no COP houses!*

*If you have further questions about this, I would recommend speaking with Rep. Samba Baldeh, as he was the most resolute in his vote against this bill.*

*Thank you,*

*[your name]*

*[your town/city] resident*

<sup>4</sup> Template also available on our website to copy and paste into an email for representatives.

<sup>5</sup> This is a link to our article "Snitch House Series" which follows in this collection of writing.

neighborhood association for meetings," she said, "by probation agents instead of having people go to their office [...] that when someone has to have a meeting with their elected, they have a meeting at the cop house [...] when they have a cookout in the neighborhood they have it at the cop house."

When rep Conley compared the snitch house to a School Resource Officer (SRO) "for neighborhoods", Wanggaard replied, "yes, very similar." Taylor, likely remembering pushback against SROs by Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT) was more hesitant, "welllll... SROs are slightly different. The School Resource Officer [...] they are not providing resources in the same way. The guidance counselor and other people are doing that piece. This is a different coordination effort." She's suggesting that, unlike SROs, cops in snitch houses should also do the work of guidance counselors and teacher aids.



Image from the 2018 publication, "From Failure to Freedom: Dismantling Milwaukee's School-to-Prison Pipeline with the Youth Power Agenda".

To hear the senators tell it, the police don't feel burdened at all. "You'd think officers don't want to have that kind of thing," Wanggaard said, "but they love it because they have the ability to control the outcome of so many issues [...] so the officer's mental health is better too." Taylor added, "if an officer only goes to a community when somebody calls and people

## “Unburden” the the police

There was a massive protest movement across Wisconsin and america last year. Senator Taylor and many other politicians who voted in favor of this police expansion were there. They took the people’s mic and spoke to gain credibility with the outpouring of people. It’s unlikely they’ve forgotten, which means they consciously betrayed us.

Let’s review: the violence of last summer’s rebellion shocked america into a deeper consideration of the systemic role of police. Some of the activists who doused Ferguson’s flames back in 2014 tried to impose their tired reformist demands onto the protest with an “8 can’t wait” list, but that co-optation was quickly and effectively responded to by abolitionists. “Defund the police” became the lasting widespread demand. Of course liberals and law school academics immediately went to work softening the rhetoric and muddying the waters.

They produced a dizzying array of confusing bullshit. Anyone who was in the streets at the end of May and the start of June 2020 knows what the score is. At that time, the protests were uncontrolled. They had the largest impact because they presented a real threat that police resources and capacity may get exhausted, if not torched. In Milwaukee, conflict didn’t reach the kinds of peaks that it did elsewhere, but even here, you could clearly hear the people’s demand. From youngsters sitting on top of cars shouting, to Lil Boosie blasting from the stereo at full volume, to people throwing bottles at the armored police vehicles, singing along, we were all demanding it, loud and clear: “fuck the police!”

Once the fires went out, the storefronts were secured, and rebels shifted from street fighting to the legal defense of those who got captured, “fuck the police” was refined, mainstreamed and defanged. The meekest, most inoffensive version became the idea that police have been “burdened” with too many tasks that are outside of their scope of expertise. Taking things off the cops plate is the easiest way for politicians to appease some portion of the protest movement.

When questioning Wanggaard about his “fund the police” bill, rep Baldeh brought up this multitude of narratives about defunding, but landed on this, the most basic one: “my understanding of it is, that if the police is doing anything that is not fundamentally within their job descriptions, that should come out of the police [...] communities of color want to reduce interaction with police.” Wanggaard replied by talking about all the people who praised and appreciated him when he used to walk the beat as a street cop. He, like most cops, doesn’t seem to understand that, by carrying a gun and a badge which gives him the authority to kill with impunity, his mere presence is a threat. Some people defend themselves by avoiding him, others by humoring or flattering him. What he ends up experiencing from others is either negative encounters with suspects he can write off as “thugs” or “bad actors” or positive encounters with people, many of whom are deferring, flattering, or respectful out of fear. This makes him, and all cops, the most unreliable storytellers of the communities they interact with.

We don’t expect Wanggaard to unlearn 30 years of false impressions, but other Wisconsin politicians also can’t even meet the minimum standard Baldeh described. When they all voting for snitch houses, every senator moved away from this, the weakest vision to come out of the year of rebellion and re-evaluation.

Senator Taylor has gone the furthest. She celebrated the many varied ways a snitch house might expand the role of police. “I’m hoping the house is going to be used by

**TALKING TO COPS IS NEVER SAFE**

	<b>CONTACTED BY THE POLICE?</b>	Stop! Don't talk alone! Even 'nice' cops are ALWAYS gathering information to land on a charge, including on people you care about. You are not required to speak with any law enforcement officer or agent.
	<b>COPS ARE ALLOWED TO LIE</b>	It is legal for cops to lie about what the subject of their investigation is. Agencies at all levels frequently share information with each other and there are very few "rules" as to how cops can ask for that information.
	<b>CALL A LAWYER INSTEAD</b>	You have a right to consult an attorney before talking to law enforcement or deciding whether or not to talk to them. You have a right to have an attorney present while being questioned by law enforcement even if you volunteer to do an interview.
	<b>NEED HELP?</b>	Your local National Lawyers Guild Chapter can provide assistance in finding political attorneys in your area. Reach out ahead of any attempts at repression and make a safety plan with trusted ones. Learn about histories of grand juries and political movements.

 **National Lawyers Guild**  
nlg.org  
centralva@nlg.org

**Content adapted from It's Going Down article**  
"Police Investigations Arising from Charlottesville  
Fascist Rally" <https://itgoingdown.org/police-investigations-arising-charlottesville-fascist-rally/>



# SNITCH HOUSE SERIES

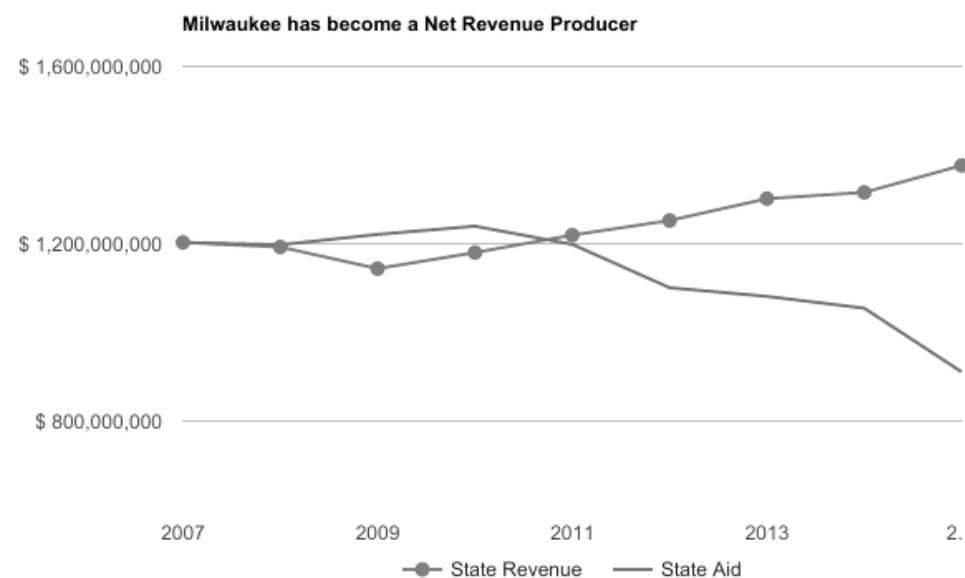
## Part 1: Background

During the May 18 public hearing on the Snitch House bill (SB124/AB258 also known as COP house bill) Lena Taylor and Van Wanggaard revealed that their co-authored, pro-cop legislation is everything we fear, and worse. We already have a long article detailing snitch houses<sup>6</sup> (bootlickers call them COP houses) but, the more we learn and reflect on supporter's statements at the hearings, the more we have to say.

There is so much to unpack from Taylor and Wanggaard's introduction that we are going to put out a three part series, starting this week. This series will cover how snitch houses:

- Reduce public safety by expanding police capacity to harm communities.
- Advance displacement of people of color to benefit real estate developers and landlords.
- Expand the role of police, letting them absorb and determine which neighbors receive much needed community resources.

Before getting into these harms snitch houses may cause, let's take a quick look at the hearing—and the shady politics going on behind this legislation.



The snitch house bill was paired with Van Wanggaard's "fund the police" bill (SB119/AB111), and introduced to the assembly committee on local government, who held the hearing on Tuesday, May 18th. SB119 would punish any city that reduced police budgets by decreasing their shared revenue payment. "Shared revenue" refers to how money collected by state taxes is distributed back to local governments. It has been declining<sup>7</sup> for the benefit

<sup>6</sup> available on our website, tagged: "snitch house"

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/with-the-state-going-back-on-its-commitment-to-communities-local-governments-are-pushed-to-consider-regressive-tax-and-fee-increases>

resource center might mean: "the police department can have a classroom, a computer lab, they can do arts and crafts, help with homework, [...] students [from Carthage College] come and work in the COP house, they volunteer in the COP house."

Shyelle Smith, from Young Moms of Madison, an organization actually providing resources and support to communities, testified. She spoke up against the consolidation of needed resources under police control. "There does need to be a resource community center in these neighborhoods. There needs to be people that are responding to the needs of the community and the people. Those people should not be police officers. The history that police have in neighborhoods of color are not good at all. They are terrorists. They are seen as terrorists in our neighborhoods. They are not to be trusted."



of direct bribery or quid-pro-quo, but it's hard to believe that Racine cops don't recognize what this corporation has done for them.



Predatory.

Also, SC Johnson either believes, or wants us to believe that what they're doing is about supporting low income people in struggling communities. Their philanthropy page foregrounds social services, education, and environmental sustainability, looking deeper you discover they actually mean economic development via buying houses for cops. When a company as big as SC Johnson grants hundreds of thousands of dollars to a non-profit, other foundations and donors tend to take notice and follow suit. If snitch houses didn't exist, these resources likely would go directly to helping people. Instead, they're absorbed by Racine's best funded, most violent and least popular institution: the police.

Senator Taylor frequently and enthusiastically embraced police control of community resources. She stated: "the purpose of the COP house is long term stabilizing [...] Improving quality of life, helping people to problem solve, reducing crime, but more important, consolidating resources and providing programming." Later, she said: "other resources come from other places [...] to the hub," and she elaborated on what wraparound

of the wealthy and well-connected in recent decades. Milwaukee already gets especially screwed over<sup>8</sup> in shared revenue, and this bill seems designed specifically to retaliate against successful local efforts<sup>9</sup> to defund the police.

Fortunately, Wanggaard's fund the police bill is more likely to end up in a dumpster fire than to become law. Democrat senators voted against it, and representatives are likely to do the same.. Governor Evers will almost certainly veto it. The snitch house bill, on the other hand, unexpectedly won unanimous support, not only in committee, but in the whole senate. If we don't push assembly democrats to vote against it, Evers is going to sign it into law. Apparently, if you put "community oriented" on it, the democrats see funding police as a bipartisan victory. We all know how much Evers longs for chances to be bipartisan with racists.

## Public testimony without the public

Public hearings on proposed state legislation are almost never readily available to the public, and this hearing was no exception. The snitch house bill was drafted in the senate then introduced in the assembly April 9. Its public hearing was added to the calendar May 5, but notification of the hearing didn't go out until May 14. The hearing itself was only 4 days later, on a Tuesday at 10:00 AM, when most working people would be unable to attend. At that hearing, senators Van Wanggaard and Lena Taylor introduced the legislation, taking up two hours of the committee's time. Then they ducked out as soon as the hearing was actually opened to public testimony, which they knew would be as critical as the last hearing of this trash. The people delivered, public testimony was unsparing and defiant<sup>10</sup>.

Most people came out against Wanggaard's fund the police bill. This bill is a silly partisan provocation, time-wasting theatre for the republican death cult's most excitable "back the badge" constituents. It is also smokescreen, dragging the overton window back to the right after last year's rebellion radically reframed public dialog on policing. With the public distracted by Wanggaard's aggressively terrible bill, boot-licking democrats can get away with supporting less obvious police funding expansions like body cam and training grants, PTSD compensation , or the snitch house bill.

These two have become tight collaborators working on this, and other bad legislation. Let's introduce them a little more.

Senator Lena Taylor represents district 4, which republicans gerrymandered to pack Shorewood liberals with part of Milwaukee's northside, making the district north of it more solidly conservative and a safer seat for senator Alberta Darling (r-River Hills). After a few years as a public defender, then private practice attorney, Taylor entered state politics in 2003. She positions herself as a tireless advocate for police-impacted communities, and opponent of the political status quo. Her actual record is uneven though, leading many to see

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.wpr.org/milwaukee-leaders-warn-dire-future-without-shared-revenue-sales-tax-increase>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.liberatemke.com/> — Liberate MKE has been leading the charge on challenging the city government to make the budget cooperative and reflective of the input of communities, specifically the call to divest 25 million dollars from the police and use that money to address the lack of resources in over-policed neighborhoods.

<sup>10</sup> [https://youtu.be/ED-ozOag\\_mA](https://youtu.be/ED-ozOag_mA) — youtube video posted by InsurgentTheatre, titled "Public Testimony on Snitch House Grant Bill May 18"

her as an opportunist. She has also faced political set-backs for bullying aides<sup>11</sup>, and workers<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, she’s a landlord who frequently evicts her tenants<sup>13</sup>. We aren’t the first to criticise her for collaborating with conservative white supremacists<sup>14</sup>, but on the snitch house bill, she certainly has become bosom buddies with Van Wanggaard, one of Wisconsin’s most racist senators.

Wanggaard gave meandering circuitous answers to a line of questioning from rep Samba Baldeh (d-Madison) about the bill’s intentions and lack of evidence. Other committee members exposed it’s total absurdity by taking it seriously. They asked what would happen if a municipality’s police budget decreased for politically neutral reasons, like retiring officers. Wanggaard had an amendment ready where a city could hold a referendum to overrule application of his dumb law. However, that solution only opened a longer discussion when representative Mark Spreitzer (d-Beloit) pointed out the absurdity of budgeting without knowing how much funding you’re working with until the next election, likely halfway through the budgeted year. Wanggaard scrambled to make up answers. It looked like even he hadn’t really considered this bill as anything but a rhetorical response to anti-police protests. After about thirty minutes of humoring him, the committee moved to the snitch house bill, and senator Taylor joined Wanggaard.

Wanggaard is a former cop. After 29 years of terrorizing the residents of Racine, he retired, joined the Racine fire and police commission, then went into state politics. He lost more often than he won, until he started cheating to stay in power. After his first failed run for state assembly in 2006, he rode the wave of anti-Obama racism to narrowly win a senate seat in 2010. In office, he was an anti-union lackey of Scott Walker, which made him very unpopular and got him recalled. He and three other republican senators lost the recall, but in a move that presaged Donald Trump’s 2020 shit fit, Wanggaard refused to concede or leave office as long as he possibly could. The next election used gerrymandered maps he helped

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cbs58.com/news/state-sen-lena-taylor-removed-from-committee> — over allegations of bullying and discrimination. Article originally published by CBS news 58 on May 8th 2018.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2018/05/07/lena-taylor-acknowledges-calling-bank-teller-racial-insult/586020002/> —

“State Sen. Lena Taylor said Monday she used a controversial phrase with a bank teller because he was deferring to his boss and wasn’t doing more to help her.

"He was going along to get along even though it wasn’t the right thing," the Milwaukee Democrat said in a lengthy interview on WNOV-AM (860).

"I said, 'You did a really good job today of acting like a good house (racial slur),' " she told host Sherwin Hughes." Article originally published by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel May 7th 2018.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/investigations/daniel-bice/2020/02/14/lena-taylor-decries-evictions-despite-history-booting-tenants/4754285002/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://archive.jsonline.com/blogs/news/199216661.html> —

“Taylor is taking heat from some on the left for her stance, an unusual one among Democrats. And it’s not the first time she’s angered critics, who have been riding her since her 2011 vote for concealed carry and her description of guns as “pieces of art.”

“Now she supports the expansion of school choice even though there is little accountability in it,” African-American community activist and talk show host Earl Ingram Jr. wrote on Facebook. “Most democrats are in opposition, but what the heck, Lena knows best.”

included in this bill, merely a better usage of current funds available.” It sounds like Larson isn’t in on Taylor and Wanggaard’s little secret, or at least he doesn’t want us to know he is.

## Resources beyond the budget

More importantly, it seems “current funds available” includes more than taxpayer budget money. Snitch houses aren’t satisfied with government money, they’re also coming after broader community resources. When representative Cindi Duchow (r-Delafield) asked about expenses, Van Wanggaard replied: “how it works is we purchase a house, get habitat for humanity involved to rehab it [...] the electricity and stuff like that comes out of dollars that the community puts into, [a foundation] it’s called ‘the outpost’.”

This time, Taylor explained: “one of the reasons they created the foundation part [...] they had to create a separate entity because they couldn’t really take some of the donations that were going to come in to help with the cop house. For example, Home Depot might be willing to donate, or Habitat for Humanity. They created a separate entity that’s outside of government to take those donations.”

She’s referring to laws about police departments from taking outright bribes from people or businesses. According to this story of Racine cop houses<sup>28</sup>, “city attorneys balked at the unprecedented idea of a police department owning a house” and Racine PD instead began running money through a non-profit, like a shell corporation. The Outpost is one of these corporations, it’s sole mission is “to provide support for community policing activities,” and it’s mostly run by one family, all relatives of Richard Polzin, the former police chief who established the first snitch house. The amount of The Outpost funnels to police varies wildly year to year, from tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

One of the major donors to Racine snitch houses is SC Johnson. Initially they donated \$25,000 to start the 6th street snitch house in 1993. Later they gave \$350,000, funding the Mount Pleasant house. They’ve given regularly, including last year after the Thelma Orr snitch house was torched by protesters<sup>29</sup>. They’ve even expanded, donating to help police create a snitch house on Chicago’s south side<sup>30</sup>. We haven’t found any suggestion

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<sup>28</sup> [https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/library/awards/goldstein/1999/99-50\(F\).pdf](https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/library/awards/goldstein/1999/99-50(F).pdf)

“THE PROBLEM: Neighborhoods troubled by crime and disorder suffered as enforcement alone proved ineffective. ANALYSIS: A survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin–Parkside found that residents were dissatisfied with their neighborhood because of crime, litter, and rundown properties; 76 percent of the residents questioned the police department’s ability to control crime in the neighborhood.”

<sup>29</sup> <https://abolishmke.wordpress.com/2021/04/15/funds-for-fires-the-cop-house-grant-bill/>

“Not for nothing, but it really seems like “building community” means “building a community of police-trusters” and “lowering crime” really means “raising property values.” Maybe a big piece of these COP houses exist to push poor people out of neighborhoods, and make room for rich people to move in, so that landlords and businesses can make more money. I just wish that there was a word for this.”

<sup>30</sup> <https://southsideweekly.com/who-is-the-community-in-community-policing/>

“What is the COP house?” she asked. “What is the purpose? What is the objective? We don’t know nothing!” Even though the plans for the house have been two years in the making, Sharp only found out about the COP house plans in February, through her alderman Anthony Beale’s newsletter. She feels that the community was not appropriately consulted on the decision by Beale, who is spearheading the plan.”



# Part 4: Snitch Houses Take from Communities to Expand the Role of Police

While advocating for snitch houses, senator Taylor made backroom deals with the republican establishment. She says she's looking for community houses that provide wrap-around services, but what's actually happening is police are taking control of resources and services, while expanding their role in society.

In early May, SB124 and AB258 were amended to remove the appropriation of grant funding, expand eligibility requirements to include smaller cities, and add a few usage specifications. Kelda Roys was the sole vote against this amendment in the senate committee, but she ultimately ended up voting in favor of the bill. During the May 18 assembly committee hearing, Mark Spreitzer asked the senators, "why [they] took the money out of the bill [...] is it going to be a two year thing, or ongoing?"

Taylor responded, "Shhhh.. Don't tell nobody," while leaning toward Wanggaard, laughing, and putting her finger in front of her mouth. Wanggaard chortled, "okay, we're not going to tell [...] We would like to see the program continue." Taylor then explained, "if the bill has finances in it, while the budget is going on, it ends up not getting done [...] the politics of the budget. Originally it was a one time hit [...] shh don't tell nobody, but I'm really excited that it's going to be two now, and the goal is y'know, forever."

It sounds like they worked with the crooked goons at the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) to take the grant appropriation out of this bill and put it into the state Department of [joke removed] (DOJ) budget. So, the funds are no longer limited to \$600,000 and one year. We'll have to wait for JFC to take up DOJ funding to hear the punch line of how much snitch houses are going to cost taxpayers.

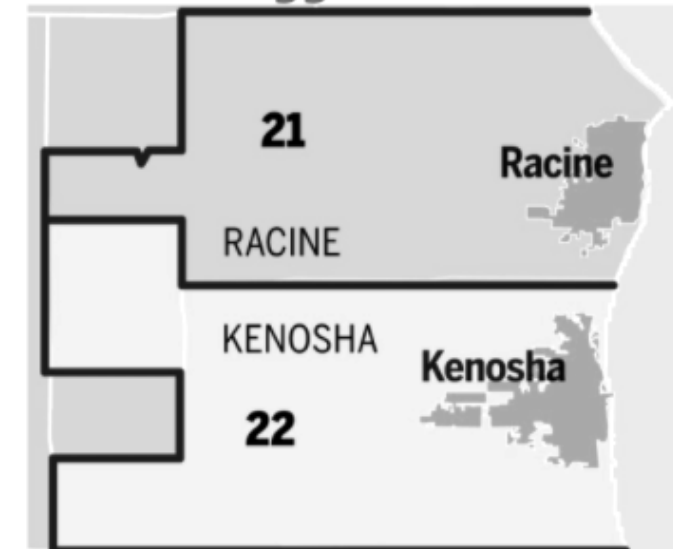
The JFC is gutting the proposed state budget, claiming Wisconsin can't afford healthcare or education for low income people. They have refused badger care expansion despite huge federal incentives, and are jeopardizing federal education recovery support funding because they want to short education's budget proportion further than allowed under the recovery act. There is no lack of funds; Wisconsin has an unexpected budget surplus. There's tons of federal covid-19 recovery money available as well. Nevertheless, republicans seem hellbent on tightening purse strings to please some dogmatic free market ideologues and the richest people in the state. Of course, when it comes to police, we know those tightwad bootlickers will suddenly become plenty generous.

In addition to expanding funding, Wanggaard's amendment also conceals it. Taking grant money out may have helped snitch houses win unanimous support from democrats in the senate. In response to complaints about his vote, Chris Larson's office (d-Milwaukee) highlighted the change, saying: "you will be happy to hear that there is no extra funding

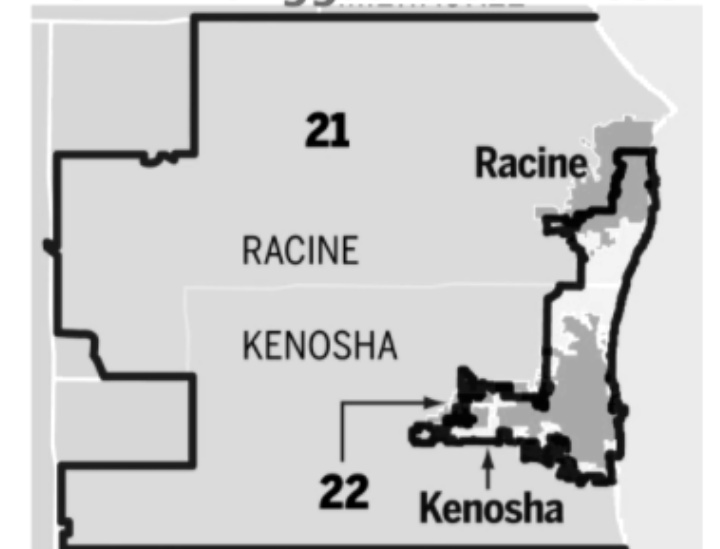
draw, which expanded his district into Kenosha county, but excluded Black and Brown voters

Wanggaard's power derives from cheating maps.

2010: Wanggaard can't win



2012: Wanggaard can't lose



from the cities of Racine and Kenosha. Since then, he's had a guaranteed place in office.

Cops protect capital and property; landlords have a lot of both. So it's not a surprise that cop Van Wanggaard and landlord Lena Taylor have teamed up on this bill. Back in March at the senate hearing on the bill, Taylor sparred with or patronized critics who actually live in her district, but praised the one conservative white guy who backed the badge. It's no wonder this time she ran out the clock for ninety minutes chatting about the false virtues of police, then "had to leave for another meeting" as soon as public testimony started.

Pushing this bill, Taylor and Wanggaard used misleading and inaccurate statistics. They made a "secret" deal to hide (but expand) direct police funding from this bill. We'll describe that shadiness in detail over the rest of this series, which will also cover how snitch houses fly in the face of protest demands, how they benefit developers and landlords, and how they expand police power to hurt communities.

# Part 2: Snitch Houses Reduce Public Safety

At the May 18 hearing, senator Van Wanggaard introduced the snitch house bill by portraying it as an attempt at police reform. “The police cannot be an occupying force in an area,” he emphatically stated. But, throughout his testimony, when describing how snitch houses work, his reformist mask slipped. He described police using snitch houses to “take over” and “gain control” of areas, exactly as an occupying force would. The reality that he, a former cop, cannot grapple with, is that police are always an occupying force in the neighborhoods they target. The houses AB258 seeks to fund are simply the first bulwarks of this occupation.

Senator Taylor joined in, describing the impact snitch houses have on the areas they target, but she relied heavily on some questionable statistics. She repeatedly cited a story about “20% of people causing 80% of the chaos.” If you look up this stat, the first thing you’ll likely find is quotes from pop-economist Malcolm Gladwell<sup>15</sup>, a sure sign that it’s dubious and exaggerated. Digging deeper, we found the actual source, a study from Duke University<sup>16</sup> where researchers were looking to prove the “Pareto Principle<sup>17</sup>,” a quirky theory that the 20/80 rule applies to many aspects of life and social phenomenon.

That’s right, Taylor’s “fact” did not come from people actually studying crime to find a statistical conclusion, but from researchers working backwards, looking first for the conclusion. They surveyed 1,000 study participants on a wide selection of variables, and highlighted the “hits” where results approximated a 20/80 ratio. Turns out, 20% of their participants accounted for 80% of convictions. That fun little study is what morphed into Taylor’s story that we only need to worry about 20% of people committing “crimes”.

Unfortunately, even if this experiment was repeated with a much larger sample size, and focused only on convictions, it still would not support Taylor’s conclusion. Convictions don’t really tell us much about “crime” (or chaos, to use Taylor’s phrasing). Not every criminal gets convicted. Consider that even FBI statistics<sup>18</sup> show police solving less than half of reported crimes. That doesn’t just mean that they are bad at their purported jobs, it also means they don’t know a lot about what’s actually happening, leading to emphatically unreliable and invalid data.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.thecrimson.com/column/behavioral-economist/article/2014/8/7/why-you-shouldnt-trust/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/12/161212115702.htm> — Adults with the most costly problems could be spotted in preschool

<sup>17</sup> The Pareto principle states that for many outcomes, roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of the causes (the “vital few”).<sup>[1]</sup> Other names for this principle are the 80/20 rule, the law of the vital few, or the principle of factor sparsity.

<sup>18</sup> <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/topic-pages/tables/table-25> — FBI Crime Table of statistics on 2018.

then the snitch house program will likely create a significant financial benefit to her personally. She has stood up to developers in the past (mostly for the benefit of individual landlords like herself). Maybe she’s not intentionally complicit in this scheme. Maybe she just doesn’t know.

Unfortunately, cooperation between private developers, government urban planners, and police to remake neighborhoods and get rich while residents get displaced is a well-known phenomenon. Matthew Desmond, another real-life sociologist, who actually studies how policy impacts people lives, wrote *Evicted*<sup>27</sup> in 2016. This Pulitzer-winning, New York Times Bestseller described real estate developer exploitation in Milwaukee specifically. Senator Taylor does know the book, she cited it while running for mayor, but if she read it, she doesn’t seem to have taken it much to heart.

Developer scheming is also not a new problem. Way back in 1982, in an essay called “From the Bulldozer to Homelessness” Herbet Ganz (another actual sociologist) demonstrated how “government policies and practices coupled with private development purposely displace poor people and reduce the supply of low-cost housing.” If senator Taylor is well intentioned, she’s clueless. There are four decades worth of heads-up to look out for developer exploitation. It took Tai, her constituent just a few minutes of listening to recognize it.

Ultimately, it doesn’t really matter whether senator Taylor is looking to cash in on the violent displacement of her neighbors, or if she’s missing this incredibly obvious and dangerous pitfall. What matters is that people are going to be hurt by her partnership with white supremacists like Van Wanggaard and her aggressive advocacy of this bill.

The next article in this series will investigate how far she’s been willing to take that partnership, the shady financing, dubious backroom deals, and redirection of resources away from communities and into police.

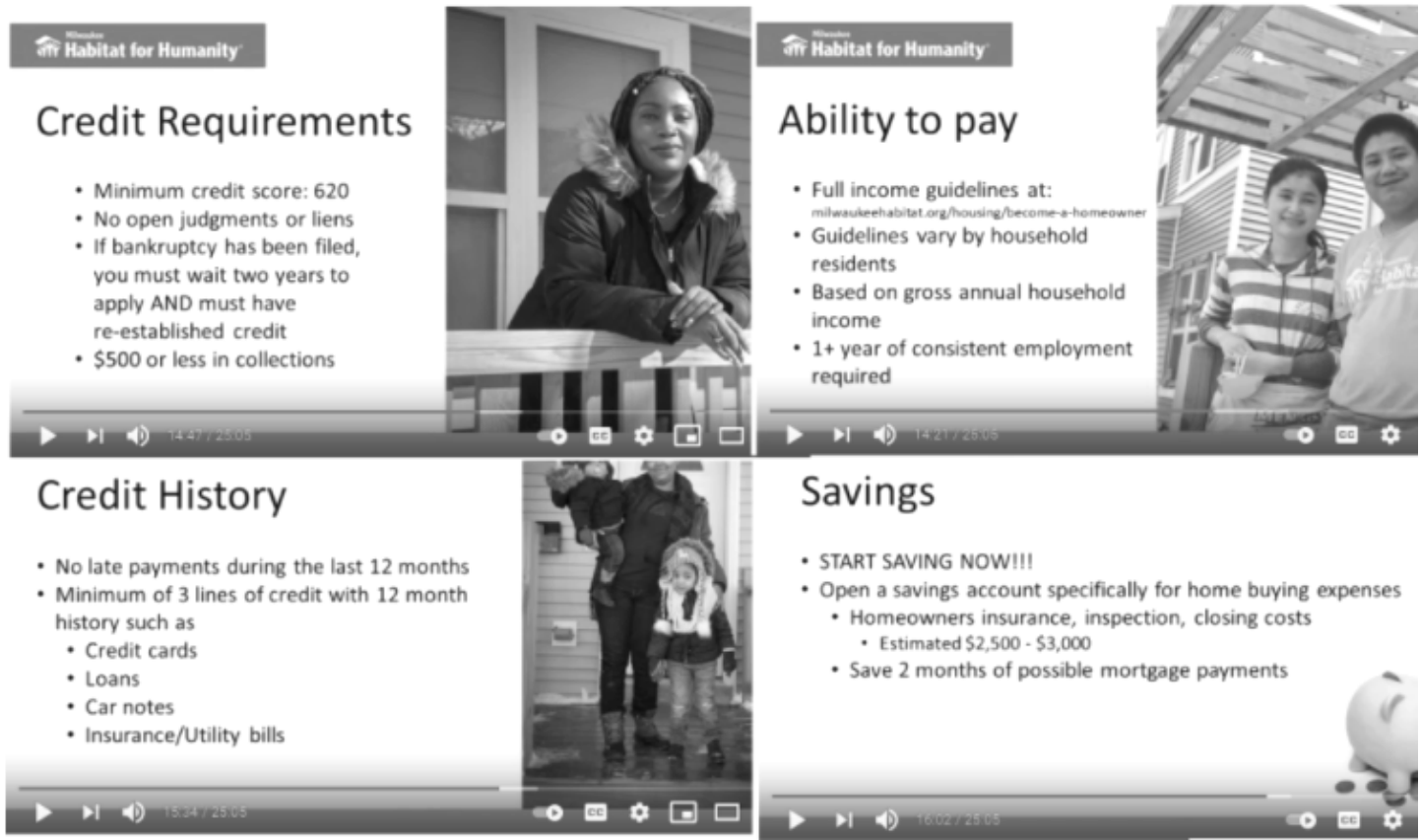


<sup>27</sup> <https://www.evictedbook.com/>

activists from Charlotte, South Carolina took to the stage at an event where “woke” academic and media personality Marc Lamont Hill was speaking. They entreated him to denounce Habitat’s practices. In response, he made fun of them, self-identified as a gentrifier, and spoke patronizingly about how their voices are valuable after they’d been pushed off the stage.

Habitat is also already active in various Milwaukee neighborhoods. In April, they launched an initiative with Bader Philanthropies to construct 80 houses in Harambee. Amidst all the fanfare, nobody detailed Habitat’s qualifications for home ownership, which are not included on Milwaukee Habitat’s website. You’ve got to register and watch a 25 minute orientation video to see the list of qualifications.

High unemployment rates and low credit scores on Milwaukee’s northside probably disqualify many Harambee residents from getting a Habitat home. Other Habitat offices are more forthcoming, and many of them admit to also categorically excluding people with felony records. Milwaukee’s Habitat office might as well. If they do, they won’t be providing housing for many people who live in amerika’s most incarcerated zip code. It’s more likely they’ll provide housing for people who want to live in Harambee after the police force the current residents out.



Lena Taylor, landlord

We’re not sure exactly how many properties Lena Taylor owns. We know that as of Feb 2020 she had taken 35 tenants to court since 2020, evicting 19 of them. At the May 18 hearing she talked a few times about specific houses that would make great snitch houses in her district. She didn’t say whether she owned property near these houses, though. If she does,

In an excellent recent episode of the All in Wisconsin podcast, guest Dr Darren Wheelock came on to discuss recidivism stats. At about the 13 minute mark, he stated: “[arrest] numbers can be skewed. If we’ve learned anything from this historical moment, is that we can’t always trust administrative numbers, [...] arrest statistics tend to show huge racial variation, [...] other people have taken that information to say, ‘see certain people offend more’ [...] but that’s not what arrest statistics are measuring, arrest statistics are almost a better measure of police behavior than they are of whether or not people are breaking the law.”

So, Taylor’s stat says more about who police target, than who is actually engaged in illegal behavior. When she says “20% of people are causing 80% of the chaos,” she should be saying “police blame 80% of the chaos on 20% of the people.” Targeting a neighborhood with a snitch house and seeking out that mythical 20 percent might make a nice, easy story, but stories are not reality. The issue with this nonsense stat was called out in public testimony, but she didn’t stick around to hear it.

Taylor also brought out specific statistics from Racine, claiming snitch houses cause drastic reductions in crime in the area they target. These are also misleading. Firstly, it should come as no surprise that people do less crime within the immediate vicinity of mini-police stations, but that doesn’t mean people are actually doing less crime over-all. Snitch houses have much the same impact as surveillance cameras<sup>19</sup>, hotspot policing<sup>20</sup>, and broken windows policing<sup>21</sup>. They saturate a targeted area and push crime out of it. Without addressing the root causes of crime, they’re just moving it around, pushing it from an area slated for “development” to a less desirable one.

Instead of investigating crimes after they occur, these are all forms of “proactive policing<sup>22</sup>” where cops try to predict the future, targeting and harassing people based on their individual evaluation of who is a threat, with all the race and class bias that entails. It’s like a dystopian sci-fi movie from 2002<sup>23</sup>, except replace the futuristic technology with cops acting on a racist hunch.

At the hearing, Taylor and Wanggaard confirmed this by talking about “problem solving” a lot. Wanggaard said, “it’s about problem solving. We had problem solving

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/asset\\_upload\\_file708\\_35775.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/asset_upload_file708_35775.pdf)  
“An increasing number of American cities and towns are currently investing millions of taxpayer dollars in surveillance camera systems. But few are closely examining the costs and benefits of those investments, or creating mechanisms for measuring those costs and benefits over time. There is extensive academic literature on the subject—studies carried out over many years—and that research strongly indicates that video surveillance has no statistically significant effect on crime rates.”

<sup>20</sup> <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1578&context=ufel> — Does Hot Spots Policing Inevitably Lead to Unfair and Abusive Police Practices, or Can We Maximize Both Fairness and Effectiveness in the New Proactive Policing?

<sup>21</sup> <https://news.northeastern.edu/2019/05/15/northeastern-university-researchers-find-little-evidence-for-broken-windows-theory-say-neighborhood-disorder-doesnt-cause-crime/> — Do more broken windows mean more crime? (“no” - ABOLISHmke)

<sup>22</sup> <https://phys.org/news/2017-09-proactive-policing-good.html> — Studies have shown that proactive policing may do more harm than good.

<sup>23</sup> Oblique reference to the movie Minority Report.



assignments every day that I went to work.” This vague notion of problem solving sounds a lot like broken windows. The police are there, making lists of people to go talk to about problems they predict will lead to crimes. As they go about “solving” problems, they are labeling people “bad actors,” guessing who might be the mythical “chaos-causing” twenty percent, and messing with their lives. That is not public safety.

## Police hurt people



A bootlicker's vision of public safety: Milwaukee police attack protesters last summer.

Putting someone in prison is a violation of public safety. Every person who gets incarcerated, extorted, arrested, harassed, or killed by police are members of the public. There is a circular logic at play, where police can be said to protect public safety, because the safety of anyone who gets hurt by the police is automatically excluded from the conversation. “We’ve had countless meetings,” Wanggaard said at one point, “with Fire and police commissioners, alderpersons, county supervisors, audience with the mayor, the chief, it’s been an ongoing thing where we really have all the stakeholders at the table.” Look at his list of “all the stakeholders at the table.” Who is missing? Would you be on it? Your neighbors? If not, you’re at risk of being perceived as a “bad actor” or “chaos causer” and thus subject to police violence.

In addition to the direct harm police cause, they also aggravate and escalate harm caused by others. Almost everyone put into prison comes back out, sooner or later. With the low-level “problem solving” offenses that proactive policing focuses on, it’s more often sooner

taxes, and they force struggling families with roots there to move to neighborhoods they can afford [...] this is a mob scheme to continue gentrifying targeted areas of metropolitan cities, and continue alienating those most marginalized in those cities.”

By then, Wanggaard and Taylor had fled to avoid public scrutiny. They couldn’t refute Renfrow’s accusation, but what they’d already said actually reinforced the conclusion that snitch houses are a boon to real estate developers.

Van Wanggaard: “Where we’re doing this [...] these neighborhoods don’t always have home ownership [...] it’s a transitional neighborhood [...] Now, one of the neighborhoods that we had, the houses that were rentals were sold [...] the whole neighborhood was lifted, the value of those homes went up [...] because the bad actors are gone. It allows you to potentially move to another area where you’re having a spike in that crime.”

Lena Taylor: “It’s transforming a house that is an eyesore and an issue, into something that has greater value to the community [...] It’s not just a property that’s going to be used for community oriented policing. It really is an opportunity to build community, and to rebuild community.”

Senator Taylor is talking about her district, as though people living there are currently devoid of community and need the help of the police to “build and rebuild” it. What exactly does “build community” mean in this context? As usual, Wanggaard was eager to say the quiet part out loud for Taylor and provide a detailed example.

“Decades ago,” he said, “we had an area [...] that was subsidized apartments and housing. They were pretty nice, but after years they weren’t kept up by the landlords and owners [...] they just didn’t have a good clientele of people coming through, a lot of drug use [...] shootings, it went off the charts. Finally the owner [...] came to the police [...] and that became the COP house. They took back the neighborhood in less than a year.”

It seems “build community” means: displace unwanted people and take over. It sounds like the Racine police even may have spent the last few decades using snitch houses to chase the same population of criminalized people from place to place. The Racine snitch house drove property values up, but displaced people to Mount Pleasant, where population density and property values likely went down, until the Mount Pleasant snitch house came and drove them back up again. Developers could buy properties cheap before the snitch house arrived, then flip them for huge profits after.

That is, when the police aren’t flipping the houses themselves, as Wanggaard described: “we sell that home to a family that becomes a part of that functioning neighborhood now, and we buy another one. So the whole process starts over again.” “The part that I love the most,” Taylor added, “is that each locality can choose how to get that house back into circulation. I personally think we should use Habitat for Humanity.”

## Non-profit partnership

It seems Habitat for Humanity is a major partner, so let’s give them a closer look. Habitat’s mission statement reads, “seeking to put God’s love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.” There’s that wonderfully vague phrase again. Habitat “builds communities” by displacing people and putting “God’s love into action” in the place where they used to live. Housing justice advocates are beginning to recognize the organization’s complicity in developer schemes. In 2019, some

# Part 3: Snitch Houses Displace Residents to Benefit Landlords

In the last article we showed how putting a snitch house in a targeted area reduces crime in that specific area, but increases economic and emotional strain for targeted residents. People experiencing stress are more likely to resort to crime, they just go somewhere further from police presence to do it.

At the May 18 hearing, committee member Sue S Conley, a democrat whose district borders zigzag tightly around Janesville, making the neighboring districts more solidly republican, recognized this dynamic. “You come into a neighborhood,” she said, “you establish the house [...] did the problem just shift to another neighborhood?” Van Wanggaard’s response was a gleeful “sometimes,” but Taylor cut him off with a more diplomatic response that acknowledged the real problem. She went onto a tangent about drug dealers operating out of their cars rather than drug houses to be more mobile. Her statement reinforced, rather than allaying, Conley’s concern. Then Wanggaard burst back in with a great real-life example.

“On the south side of Racine,” he said, “we have a COP house [...] Some of these bad actors moved into the village of Mount Pleasant that never had these problems. All of a sudden they’ve got a neighborhood that is turning into one of ‘those kinds’ of neighborhoods.” He is describing displacement, people of color uprooted from where they were living by the police, forced to move to another, whiter area, where they weren’t welcome. Some may have resorted to burglary or theft to deal with the economic strain of that forced movement, or maybe the existing (white) residents just started calling the police on their new (Black and Brown) neighbors a lot.

The snitch house caused the problem in Mount Pleasant, but Wanggaard saw only one solution: more policing. He continued, excitedly: “they built a new COP house in Mount Pleasant [...] that took that neighborhood back and now they don’t have anyone in Mount Pleasant that’s causing a problem. You’ve just gotta be persistent.”

The obvious question senator Wanggaard isn’t anticipating is, where did the “bad actors” go next? Mount Pleasant is south of Racine, so maybe they were pushed further south, out of Racine county, where they’re no longer the concern of the Racine police department. Again, the snitch house looks great on paper, but the lived experience for people in targeted communities is forced movement. It is a more modest and disguised continuation of old-fashioned amerikan ethnic cleansing. If we keep allowing the police to cause problems, and then present more police as the only solution, many of us are going to end up living in open air prisons and suburban poverty clusters that can verge into refugee camps.

A member of the public picked up the house flipping thread after rep Conley laid it down. “These snitch houses do not improve the lives of the people in the neighborhood,” Tai Renfrow pointed out, “they simply improve the neighborhood itself. They drive up property

than later. People are not “rehabilitated” in prison, but traumatized. Traumatized people are both more likely to hurt other people, and more likely to be targeted again by police. Those coming out of prison are rearrested and reconvicted. We’re back to police choices resulting in 20% of people getting convicted 80% of the time.

This cycling of people between targeted neighborhoods and prison has been studied by actual criminologists. Loïc Wacquant called it a “Deadly Symbiosis<sup>24</sup>” nearly twenty years ago. It’s a known problem, but politicians prefer easy stories backed by dubious stats provided by police. When snitch houses bring proactive policing to specific neighborhoods, they accelerate the cycle, producing a growing erosion of overall public safety.

Not everyone in the room had made the unexamined assumption that police create public safety. At one point, representative Baldeh, the only Black person on the local government committee, asked Van Wanggaard directly, “did you come across any data that correlates police to security and safety?” Wanggaard replied, “look at Milwaukee” and tried to bring up other anecdotal evidence, about long 911 call times due to supposed understaffing. Baldeh insisted on actual data, and all Wanggaard could say is “I’m sure we can get you some.”

## Snitch houses and trusting the police

The main argument for snitch houses is that they build trust in communities. “If it’s ran as intended,” Taylor said, “It [...] does not lead to an oversaturation of police [...] It helps to break down the barriers and establish relationships between communities and law enforcement.” Wanggaard chimed in, without maintaining Taylor’s reformist language. “It brings police to a central place in the discussion,” he said, “I’ve seen first hand how they can take back neighborhoods from thugs.” We all know what the word thug means in a cop’s mouth.

Later on, Wanggaard’s mask slipped all the way off, revealing the military occupation logic behind snitch houses: “you get participation by the community [...] in some of those inner city neighborhoods, they don’t want to be connected to the police because they are

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<sup>24</sup> From “Deadly Symbiosis” by Loïc Wacquant:

“Consider three brute facts about racial inequality and imprisonment in contemporary America:

(i) Since 1989 and for the first time in national history, African Americans make up a majority of those entering prison each year. Indeed, in four short decades, the ethnic composition of the U.S. inmate population has reversed, turning over from 70 percent white at mid-century to nearly 70 percent black and Latino today, although ethnic patterns of criminal activity have not fundamentally changed during that period.

(ii) The rate of incarceration for African Americans has soared to levels unknown in any other society and is higher now than the total incarceration rate in the Soviet Union at the zenith of the Gulag and in South Africa at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle. As of mid-1999, close to 800,000 black men were in custody in federal penitentiaries, state prisons, and county jails—one male out of every twenty-one, and one out of every nine between twenty and thirty-four.<sup>1</sup> On any given day, upwards of one third of African-American men in their twenties find themselves behind bars, on probation, or on parole. And, at the core of the formerly industrial cities of the North, this proportion often exceeds two thirds.

(iii) The ratio of black to white imprisonment rates has steadily grown over the past two decades, climbing from about five to one to eight and a half to one. This rising “racial disproportionality” can be traced directly to the War on Drugs launched by Ronald Reagan and expanded under George Bush, Sr. and Bill Clinton. In ten states, African Americans are imprisoned at more than ten times the rate of European Americans. And in the District of Columbia, blacks were thirty-five times more likely than whites to be put behind bars in 1994.”



Some actual researchers: Monica C Bell (left) and Daanika Gordon.

afraid of retaliation. The neighborhood is organized in a defensive position [...] once you get a cop house there [...] the officer goes door to door [...] it's a really good way to get into the community."

As abolitionists, we don't think police should ever be trusted. They lie and they use lies to hurt people. That's their job. Why do politicians want us to trust people who are going to lie to us and hurt us?

Even for those who are not abolitionists—whose actual goal is for police to be trusted—proactive policing and snitch houses are bad answers. If you want police to be trusted, maybe consider making them trustworthy, have them behave more like they do in communities where they are trusted. That makes sense, right? Police are most trusted in wealthy white suburbs. Do police set up snitch houses and go door-to-door harassing people in the wealthy white suburbs? No! They respond to calls, promptly and effectively. In targeted, low income, urban neighborhoods, the police say they cannot respond to calls promptly and effectively, because they are putting most of their time and effort into preventing serious violent crime. How do they go about preventing serious violent crime? Proactive, "community oriented" policing: saturation, harassment, and brutality, exactly the things that erode trust.

Monica C Bell<sup>25</sup>, and Daanika Gordon<sup>26</sup>, more actual sociologists, who actually studied crime and policing, found that police treat different communities very differently. Their practices reinforce distrust, as well as segregation and structural inequality. That is ultimately what snitch houses will do. If you don't have time to read heavy academic papers, but you do like podcasts, where hosts make even dense subjects lighter with fun jokes, You're Wrong About did a decent episode about murder that summarizes Bell and Gordon's work, and goes in-depth into the increasing failure of police to respond effectively to violent crime.

In summary, at best, snitch house policing pushes criminal activity out of the targeted area without reducing the economic and social/emotional stress that actually causes crime. Indeed, police saturation and harassment adds to stress. It violates the safety of the people who get targeted, and destabilizes the lives of anyone who doesn't cooperate or conform to police expectations. Snitch houses drive up overall crime, but push it to other areas. If you focus narrowly on the targeted area, you end up with the kind of stats senator Taylor cited repeatedly in the hearing and the appearance of a drop in crime.

Pushing crime to other areas means pushing people to other areas and transforming neighborhoods, a process some call gentrification. The next article in this series will tackle that subject.



Mount Pleasant cops, just out there flipping houses.

<sup>25</sup> Author of "Anti-Segregation Policing," and Associate Professor of Law at Yale Law School and an Associate Professor of Sociology at Yale University. Her areas of expertise include criminal justice, welfare law, housing, race and the law, qualitative research methods, and law and sociology.

<sup>26</sup> Daanika Gordon is an Assistant Professor of Sociology. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 2018. Daanika's research explores the intersections of race, space, and the law. Her current project analyzes the relationships between racial segregation and policing. Using several data sources, including ethnographic observation of police work, she describes how the police respond to and shape unequal urban landscapes.